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—J. L. Benvenisti

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by James Kritzeck

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A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature, and the Arts

THIRTY-THIRD YEAR OF PUBLICATION

—week by week—

FACTS OF LIFE

ANNIHILATION of the race, leukemia, bone cancer, feeble-minded and malformed children—these are terrible things to think about, and we would like to be able to put them from our minds. Perhaps we wish that people would stop talking about these distressing subjects. Maybe, we are tempted to hope, if we just ignore them, the goblins will go away.

Unfortunately, the record of history affords no grounds for such a hope. Distasteful as it may be, we must recognize reality even when it is ugly, and come to terms with it. And today, in the hydrogen age, nuclear fission is one of the realities of life, and from it grows the list of horrors mentioned above.

What will a nuclear war mean? Must we continue the tests of giant hydrogen bombs? What will be the effects of these test explosions? The answers to these questions demand knowledge of the military, political and scientific facts, and these facts are hard to get at. The medical-scientific facts especially are now a matter of world-wide controversy. The official "facts," that the effects of radioactive fall-out are negligible, have now been opposed by the findings and predictions of experts as fully qualified as the scientists they disagree with. All a layman can conclude, after examining the conflicting evidence, is that radioactive rain from H-bomb tests will probably be responsible in the next few decades for a number of deaths, some thousands, very likely, from blood and bone cancer and perhaps other diseases. And there may be other adverse effects of radioactive exposure. What makes the official claims less convincing than they once were is the fact that government spokesmen have consistently minimized these dangers, and have lately been forced to revise their optimistic statements, always in the less reassuring direction.

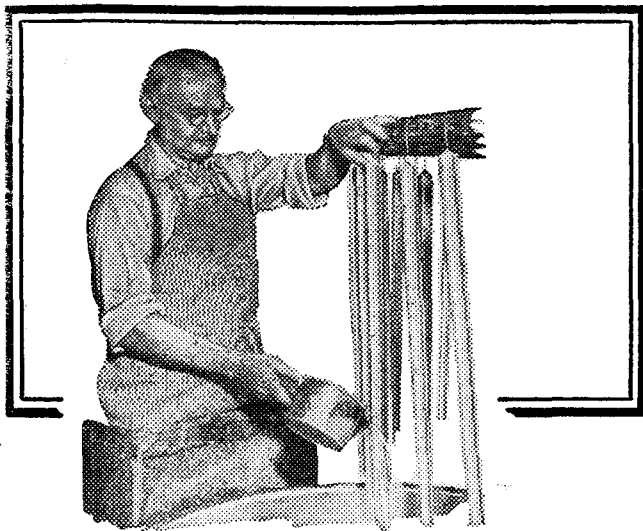
There has been comparatively little discussion of

the political and military aspects of the problems raised by the new weapons. The principle of "massive retaliation" as our best defense has already become a kind of axiom, with Great Britain now planning to rely almost wholly upon it. And it has seemed impossible to doubt the military desirability of the super-bombs as weapons.

ONE VOICE, however, has been raised in disagreement with these views. In a recent issue of *Life*, Atomic Energy Commissioner Thomas E. Murray re-opens the military-political debate. Commissioner Murray strongly mistrusts reliance on the H-bomb as a deterrent to enemy aggression. He points out that both the Communist and free nations know that to use the giant bombs would be to plunge the world into a catastrophe from which no victor could emerge. The H-bomb can be considered, then, only for ultimate and "desperate" use; it cannot—and will not—be used in the small "brush fire" wars the Russians are encouraging all over the world. If the West relies only on the super-bomb, it will be helpless to meet limited aggression, except with "moral indignation."

Even militarily, says Commissioner Murray, the multimegaton H-bomb performs least efficiently against classical military objectives. Its effect—the total destruction of vast areas—has no reasonable military usefulness. Mr. Murray urges, therefore, that we turn to the development and production of small, atomic weapons, tactically useful on conventional battlefields.

There is, we think, a great deal of value in what Mr. Murray has to say, although his plan would certainly not solve all the problems. A couple of troublesome points are the distinction between a "small" nuclear weapon and a large one, and the



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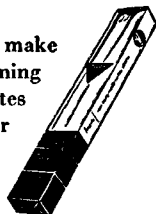
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classification of warfare as “conventional” when nuclear weapons are used at all. But we are glad that Commissioner Murray has published his article. He has disagreed with his fellow-commissioners on a number of previous occasions, and has been overridden with little or no discussion of the issues he raised. Now, in his article in *Life*, Commissioner Murray has put his case before the American people.

This is where the whole problem of the bombs belongs. Security regulations and technical complexities have made our nuclear arms program, in Mr. Murray’s words, “unmanageable by an informed and responsible public opinion.” Security requirements are often exaggerated, as we discover every day, and the testimony of the experts has become confused and contradictory. Some of the decisions to be made are military-technical, of course, but more of them are moral and political. And, in a democracy, such decisions are the people’s.

It would be more efficient, perhaps, to entrust these matters to the hands of the few, and not the many; it would be easier to rely on the experts, and let them bear the responsibility. Nevertheless, the ultimate responsibility is the electorate’s, and they must take it up.

UNDER FIRE

THE GROWTH OF supermarket chains in recent years has greatly modified many patterns in the American food industry. New needs have arisen for regulation in the interest of the consuming public. This development has also led the larger meat-packing companies to request a release from a 1920 Justice Department consent decree limiting their activities to packing and processing meat products; they want to open their own retail stores.

By the Packers and Stockyards Act of 1921 they have been operating under the rather lenient supervision of the Department of Agriculture. For this reason giant retail food chains with packing plants of their own seek to be classified as packers. All this appears to be pushing things toward changes in the ground rules. If regulation of the packers were shifted by law to the more stringent Federal Trade Commission, there could be much less objection to their engaging in retail trade, selling milk and cream and marketing various sorts of non-meat products. Even as they are being investigated by Senator Kefauver’s Anti-Trust Committee, it is obvious that the “big packers” are in a far less dominant position the country over than they were thirty-

five years ago. But shouldn’t the competition they encounter, or fear, lead to better meat prices at our local food stores?

AMBASSADOR RICHARDS RETURNS

WHEN former - Representative James P. Richards (Dem., S.C.) reports to Congress on his mission as the President’s ambassador in the Middle East, he can point to a number of accomplishments. The Eisenhower Doctrine is now subscribed to by such nations as Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Lebanon, Iraq, Libya and Greece. He was warmly received in the non-Arab countries. If he was not invited to Amman, it was because Jordan did not want to arouse any unnecessary antagonisms. Likewise, fear of damaging the chances of the Doctrine in the Arab countries helped keep Israel from endorsing it in so many words.

Of course the most spectacular development during the Richards mission was King Hussein’s victory in Jordan. There, however, the military phase of the Eisenhower Doctrine—and the dispatching of the Sixth Fleet and United States Marine units—was the important factor. It coincided with strong support of Hussein by Saudi Arabia and the sending of strong contingents of Turkish troops to the Syrian border.

Nothing as yet is definitely settled, but there is reason for restrained gratification that in its first, quite unexpected, test the Eisenhower Doctrine has met the challenge. If certain national interests and rivalries favored the cause of the free world in this near-showdown, our policy proved to be well-designed to take advantage of them.

In order to keep things moving in this reverse direction from Suez, however, a number of changes should be considered. The need for aid throughout the area can scarcely be gainsaid. Are straight government grants and loans the best instruments in a region stirred by native aspirations, anti-colonialism, Soviet agitation and widespread anti-Americanism? The repeated observation that the powerful United States is to take the place vacated by declining France and Britain is none too reassuring to many of our potential friends in the Middle East.

Somehow or other all this has to become much more of a joint venture. Military missions to a number of these countries could, for example, be headed by well-trained Greek or Turkish officers—theyself notable examples of the independence and strength to be achieved through American military aid. It is said that in many underdeveloped countries

the people make little distinction between UN and American aid. Yet in the Middle East lively fears of imperialism might be somewhat assuaged if more assistance could be channeled through the UN, with international personnel. For much the same reason a considerably higher proportion could be sent through private agencies, religious and secular.

The feeling that American aid is genuinely humanitarian could likewise be engendered if the United States would resume food shipments to Egypt, deprived of our surpluses since last September. Do our policy-makers really believe that a more desperately hungry Egyptian people will be any more tractable, that if they were to turn upon Nasser under such circumstances his successor would be as moderate, that this policy of withholding food from the starving does not play directly into Soviet hands? And does not such a policy work against the achieving of peace in the Middle East, essential in itself and vital if Communism there is to be thwarted?

All this would add up to a stronger rather than a less forceful American policy. It would be a program warmly supported and carried out by many friends and allies.

PRAYER PILGRIMAGE FOR FREEDOM

THREE YEARS ago, on March 17, 1954, the Supreme Court of the United States passed a decision on desegregation. As this is written, leaders of every major Negro organization are organizing a Prayer Pilgrimage to Washington. Thousands of Christians will gather for the sole purpose of praying for racial justice in this country. By their pilgrimage they will bear witness to the absence of this justice. They hope to awaken the conscience of the nation to the desire and need for such justice in this country.

Such a movement deserves strong support. We lend our own voice and prayers to those who gather at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington at noon on May 17, 1957.

JOSEPH R. McCARTHY

THE DEATH of Senator Joseph R. McCarthy has removed from the national scene a man who will long be a symbol of certain political forces and methods in American life. In a sense Joseph McCarthy was an instrument as well as an agent of these forces. For in a particularly convulsive

period of American political life, the people found in him a focus for their anxieties, discontents and fears. McCarthy aroused deep and strong loyalties, and equally deep and strong hostilities. While he was a political power, there was a cleavage in our society which could not be bridged by previous commitments to party, country, or religion.

The bitter rancor, hatred and suspicion of this period are slowly receding. That deep division in our society, that crippling wound, is slowly healing. For after the Army-McCarthy hearings and the Senate censure the power of the McCarthy legend dwindled with the startling suddenness of a deflated balloon. Already there are those who would minimize the phenomenon of McCarthyism. It was, they suggest, a temporary violence that generated its own destruction. This attitude, we believe, is a mistaken one. It makes too little of a person and a phenomenon that severely tested the fabric of our democratic society, that showed forth its strengths and its weaknesses.

There were, we think, too few articulate voices opposed to McCarthyism when it was a power to reckon with. It touched and swayed the highest offices in the country. It made light of checks and balances. Although it has faded, it has left its mark. We do it less than justice if we forget that it is a political possibility never finally exorcised.

The Commonweal early opposed McCarthyism because the editors believed that it embodied a simplistic approach to ethics and politics. Truth and falsehood, good and evil are not so neatly divided and measured as McCarthyism implied. The evil of Communism can not justify every action nor determine every attitude of its adversaries. Differences in prudential political judgments are inevitable; they are not sufficient to justify charges of treason. On those grounds we opposed Senator McCarthy and the movement bearing his name.

The death of such a man does not permit a silent notice. Nor does the pious Latin proverb, "of the dead, nothing but good," provide an adequate response. No man is wholly good, and to isolate the good is to dismember the man. But neither is he totally bad, and to judge any man so is inhuman arrogance and a disservice to the truth. However harsh it may sound to some secular ears, no Catholic can fail to believe that by McCarthy's death we are all diminished.

As he was the symbol of McCarthyism we opposed him unalterably. As he was a towering immediate fact of a complex era, we leave more objective judgment to the future. As he was a man we pray for him. May he rest in peace.

Faith of the Moslems

"FEW RELIGIONS HAVE MANAGED SO CONSISTENTLY TO INCORPORATE SO MANY DISPARATE ELEMENTS AND MINDS WITHIN THEMSELVES"

JAMES KRITZECK

SOME WEEKS AGO, as few Americans were unaware, King Saud ibn Abd-al-Aziz Al Saud visited the United States. It was not the King's first visit to this country, but it was his first visit as, and indeed the first visit of, a ruling monarch of Saudi Arabia. The King and his entourage, wearing the robes and *kufiyyahs* of the desert, speaking the Arabic of the desert, and not many days distant from the palaces of the desert, did not appear in the least nervous about their visit. Americans, on the other hand, appeared nervous as cats. Much of that nervousness, no doubt, could be written down to the troubled political situation in the King's part of the world, and America's great interest (not to say part) in it. The much-publicized remarks of the Mayor of New York City on the visit, too, whatever else may be true about them, were scarcely in the nature of a tranquilizer. But there was another part of the American nervousness which bore a striking similarity to that of any host who suddenly discovers that he does not really know very much about his guests.

Among the millions of words written and spoken, read and heard, concerning the King during his visit, those which would have demonstrated some real knowledge of him—"Wahhabi," for instance, or "Hanbalite"—were hardly to be found. In the end, even words like "oil" and "strategic position" tended to disappear in favor of that captivating safety-valve for everyone's unsureness: little Prince Mashhur. The child, at least, was understood.

It could be powerfully and truthfully argued, of course, that the King's own subjects could not be expected to greet the President of the United States any more knowledgeably. But that hardly constitutes a good reason why Americans should continue to be so ill-informed (and therefore to be forced, on occasion, to accept downright false information) about the Is-

lamic world in general. Above all else, it is time for them to realize that no profound understanding of the Islamic world is possible without an understanding of Islam, and more particularly of Islam as it is lived by modern Moslems.



Such an understanding is not easily won. The richness and resilience of a few great world religions like Islam is a striking datum of human history which, in itself, discourages attempts at brief generalization about them. Moreover, swift recourse to theology books is not usually the wisest course for anyone setting out to understand religious people. Such recourse may (and usually must) be had eventually, but a careful observation and questioning of the people themselves, in the earlier stages of such an investigation, is likely to prove more successful.

These cautions, and many others which could be added, have a special force when one turns to Islam. Few religions (Hinduism, though, would be another) have managed so consistently to incorporate so many disparate elements and minds within themselves; few have theologized with such abandon and such scanty influential result. There are non-Moslems, indeed, who appear to have as great an understanding of Islamic theology as any living Moslem, and an infinitely greater understanding of Islamic history, but some of them are very far indeed from understanding the Moslems. The following general remarks on Islamic belief and practice are offered with these cautions in mind, under the doom of superficiality from the start, and with no claim to originality beyond the audacity of the attempt.

THE NAME of the religion, Islam (invariably preferred by its believers to the name Mohammedanism), is an Arabic word meaning "surrender," and its believers call themselves Moslems (or, more accurately, Muslims), meaning "those who have surrendered"—to God and His community on earth. The world's roughly

Mr. Kritzeck, a regular contributor, is a member of the Department of Oriental Studies at Princeton.

four hundred million Moslems are centered chiefly in the northern and eastern parts of Africa, and the western and southern parts of Asia. The largest national representation is that of Pakistan. There is only one direction, though that one is of considerable importance, in which Islam is greatly expanding today, and that is southward in both East and West Africa. Islam regarded itself as a universal religion from the start, so there has never been any perfect ethnic or linguistic tie among Moslems, though Arabic (in a special way, over a larger area, and for a longer time), Persian, Turkish, and Urdu have come to be the principal languages for its expression.

The only basic tie among Moslems, as a matter of fact, is the simple profession of faith: "There is no god but the God (Allah), and Mohammed is His messenger." The believing recitation of this profession, usually before witnesses, is sufficient in itself to make one a Moslem. Islam has no church, no priesthood, no sacraments, and next to no liturgy. The so-called orthodox or "Sunnite" pattern of belief and practice, however, enjoys the adherence of all but a small percentage of Moslems. There are, none the less, a great many sects (seventy-three is the traditional number), as well as religio-legal entities, separable from "orthodoxy" in varying degrees and according to a variety of criteria. Chief among these sects is Shiism, which began among the political partisans of Mohammed's cousin and son-in-law Ali and his heirs, and developed (through a maze of sub-sects like the Ja'farism of modern Persia, Zaydism of Yemen, and Khoja Isma'ilism, led by the Agha Khan, of Pakistan) distinct doctrinal, legal, and ritualistic features. It is important to notice, however, that sectarianism in Islam has never had quite the connotations of heresy in Christianity; as a matter of fact, the analogy would be rather as if Christianity had begun with fundamentalist or radical Protestantism.

For Islam is nothing if not the religion of a book. The Koran is a collection of one hundred and fourteen chapters (called *surahs*) in a unique style of Arabic prose-poetry recording the formal utterances of Mohammed during the approximately twenty years previous to his death in 632. The book is strictly believed by Moslems to constitute God's final and consequently singular revelation to mankind. There has never been any universally or even widely accepted authority in Islam other than that of the Koran; questions of its interpretation have always been, therefore, of fundamental importance. The Koran has been supplemented, however, in several ways. It was supplemented first by the custom (*sunnah*) of Mohammed, established principally by means of the tradition-literature (*hadith*) about him and his companions, based in turn upon chains of more or less authentic transmitting authorities, evaluated by means of an intricate science.

As efficacious a supplement, surely, was provided by the creation of certain legal principles, particularly inference by analogy (*qiyas*) and consensus of opinion (*ijma'*). The technical term of Islamic law, which has the Koran as its basis, is *Shari'ah*, and as one authority remarks, it "extends to every detail alike of the private life, the domestic, social, and political relationships, and the religious duties of the believer." Even the Sunnites, however, have four recognized schools of legal interpretation, all inaugurated in the eighth and ninth centuries, namely the Hanifite, Maliki, Shafi'ite, and Hanbalite schools. In modern times the *Shari'ah* has been subjected to many significant strains, and has been reduced in places to what we should call canon law (though continuing, as before, to regulate somewhat wider fields such as inheritance); in Turkey it has been abolished. For that matter, grave doubts have been cast upon the authenticity of the bulk of the tradition-literature (largely, it must be admitted, by Western orientalists), and even the Koran itself has begun to be discussed in terms of a critical text-history, despite conservative Moslem protests that such a thing is, by its very nature, impossible.

Islamic systematic theology, as distinct from tradition-science and legal interpretation, began in the later ninth century as a response to the influx of late Greek philosophical notions, and largely in opposition to a group of rationalistic Moslem philosophers called Mu'tazilites or "Separatists." The summae of the greatest earlier theologians, al-Ash'ari, for example, or the even greater al-Ghazali, have proven to be less influential on modern Moslems, however, than that of Ibn Taymiyah, a reactionary theologian of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries.

LIKE MANY ANOTHER religion, Islam has carefully maintained its distinction between faith (*iman*) and practice (*'ibadat* and *ihsan*). Faith, usually defined as "assent to that which comes from God, and confession to it," has been formulated in a creed considerably more complicated than the profession of faith. There are six classic articles in the creed: concerning God, angels, scriptures, prophets and "messengers," resurrection and judgment, and predestination. The God of Islam is, broadly speaking, the God of Judaism, without those truths about Him revealed by Christ. His Arabic name, already alluded to, suggests the most fundamental Moslem dogma about Him, His unity. "He did not beget," says the Koran, "and was not begotten." He is otherwise invested with the same general attributes of Jahweh. Moslem angels, too, are those of Judaeo-Christian theology, even to their names; Satan figures, as do the "jinn" (the genii of the *Arabian Nights*), similar to but not precisely identical with lesser devils.

The references to earlier scriptures in the Koran are sufficiently vague to render their exact identification difficult. Only a few of the Old Testament books are mentioned by name, and the Gospel is treated as a book revealed to Christ. Mohammed at first appealed to the authority of these books to uphold his own prophethood and religion, but later seemed to suggest that these books had been hopelessly falsified; Moslems have never felt obliged, therefore, to justify the inconsistencies (which exist in considerable numbers) between the Koran and the earlier scriptures in the forms in which they have come down to us. The Moslems also distinguish prophets from "messengers"; the latter are holy men sent to specific peoples. The Koran mentions eight messengers and about two dozen prophets; all but a few are Hebrews. Mohammed himself is regarded as both the "seal" of the prophets and the messenger to the Arabs. Christ appears in the Koran as a messenger born of the Virgin Mary (by Virgin Birth) who performed miracles but was not, however, crucified; Mohammed may have been following the docetist heresy in this instance. It is a widespread later Moslem belief, still current and not entirely without Koranic support, that Christ will return at the end of the world to slay the Antichrist. He is often called the "Word" of God and His "Spirit" in the Koran, and "Messiah" is also commonly used with His name.

The Koran bears strong witness to the resurrection of the flesh and the Last Judgment of human souls. Only heaven and hell are eternal, though it would appear that hell is a kind of purgatory for some Moslems, and that Mohammed, and possibly some other prophets and messengers, have intercessory powers with God for them. Many unfair remarks have been made about predestination in Islam. The truth seems to be that both predestination and free will are taught, and that the matter of harmonizing them is left to the devices of the exegete and the ordinary believer. The Koran says, for example, "God causes whom He wills to err, and whom He wills He guides; and you shall assuredly be called to account for your doings!" The modern Moslem, however, does incline in many particulars toward fatalism.



ISLAMIC PRACTICE is, as might be expected, a vastly complex universe, ranging from the obligatory "Five Pillars" through the "necessary-but-not-obligatory" on down to the "voluntary" acts of the Moslem. The "Five Pillars" are as follows: the profession of faith, prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and pilgrimage.

One of the most attractive things about Islam for a Christian is its devotion to prayer. There is a set form of ritual prayer, prefaced by ablutions and accompanied by prostrations, for the five daily prayers prescribed by Islamic tradition. The Moslem usually prays in the mosque only at noon on Fridays (the Moslem sabbath). In the eighth, ninth, and tenth centuries there arose in Islam an important movement of contemplative prayer known as Sufism. It began as simple asceticism with a few individuals and groups, some of whom, at any rate (Rabi'ah and al-Hallaj, for instance), can be said with some certitude, in the light of their unequivocal connecting of prayer-life with the supernatural virtues, to have reached supernatural mysticism. Sufism systematized itself into several paths (*tariqat*) with stages (*maqamat*) leading to mystical illumination, the whole greatly resembling the classic Christian ordering of the interior life. Unfortunately, it tended eventually toward a doctrinal pantheism, on the one hand, and toward the excessive use of ecstasy-inducing techniques and stimulants on the other, and settled into types of religious orders (really more like lodges or "third orders"), which in modern time exercise only a minimal influence.

The only obligatory fast is the one, somewhat resembling the Christian Lent, during the month of Ramadan, which, because of the lunar reckoning from the Hijrah, or flight of Mohammed from Mecca to Medina in 622, may fall at any time of the year; it is a total fast, but only from daybreak to sunset. The end of Ramadan, and the birthday of Mohammed, are the chief holidays for Sunnite Islam. Moslems are, by the way, forbidden at any time to eat pork, the meat of that which dies of itself or has been strangled, blood, and (a rare enough modern temptation) food offered to a heathen god. Alcohol is likewise forbidden, though some ingenious exegesis has been produced to modify that prohibition. Obligatory alms, or "zakat," on property and certain kinds of income, once financed the great Islamic empires; now the manner of its payment is, by and large, left up to the individual Moslem's conscience. The pilgrimage, or "hajj," to Mecca is considered obligatory only for those who are "able." The major goal of the pilgrimage, the Ka'bah or Black Stone in Mecca (toward which all Moslem mosques are oriented) is a relic of pre-Islamic religion, although it was incorporated into Islam by Mohammed and identified as having been built by Abraham and Ishmael. Most of the additional rites connected with the pilgrimage are not considered obligatory. A few the-

ologians have considered the holy war, or "jihad," as a sixth pillar of Islamic practice.

THE MODERN Moslem is true to these beliefs and practices in his fashion. However thick may be the gloss of elements of "folk" Islam, the basic items in the creed and the pillars are common, with slight modifications, to all Moslems. However, in recent times there have been such stirrings in Islam—from within, though largely in response to various challenges from without—that it is unlikely that the modern Moslem is as fully complacent about the omni-responsive nature of his religion as his ancestors were. He may even be affected by one or another of the modern movements in Islam.

The low ebb to which Islam sank in seventeenth-century Arabia, for instance (which, if reports are true, was almost a return to primitive religion), gave rise to the movement called Wahhabism, founded by a certain Abd-al-Wahhab, calling for a return to Islam's first principles and championing the severe Hanbalite legal code. Having enjoyed the patronage of the Saudi tribal leaders, whose descendants came to power after the first World War, this way of thought is now general throughout Saudi Arabia. Another movement, stemming from the Pan-Islamism advocated by Jamal-al-Din al-Afghani in the later nineteenth century, centers its hopes for Islam's future upon some return of political unity to the Islamic world. The uncompromising thought of the Moslem Brotherhood, recently suppressed in Egypt, has many of the same elements of revolutionary idealism. Still another movement, a syncretism not unlike Unitarianism and the Ramakrishna mission in Hinduism, has led the Babis and Bahais completely out of Islam; an apostolic movement with similar elements in what is now Pakistan, called the Ahmadiyyah, is viewed with considerable suspicion by orthodox Moslems.

A more fascinating, though less influential line of thought was taken by al-Afghani's disciple Muhammad Abdu (d. 1905), the first great Islamic "modernist," who attempted to re-formulate Islamic doctrine with an eye toward the progress, especially in the sciences, achieved in the West. The scene of this effort, surprisingly enough, was the bed-rock theological school of al-Azhar in Cairo. As followed up by his pupil Rashid Rida, however, the attempt came back full-cycle to Ibn Taymiyah and a new doctrinal rigidity. Somewhat more successful, perhaps, was Sir Muhammad Iqbal's attempt at harmonizing Islamic theology with the thought of modern writers on philosophy and mysticism.

Even greater challenges are in store for modern Islam. Westernization, modernization, and industrialization have started within its world with such momentum

that nothing anyone can do could possibly remove their effects or call a halt to them. The basic social institution, the Moslem family, is in the process of a tremendous change, owing to increased mobility, new opportunities for livelihood, weakening group ties, and a burgeoning of liberty and educational opportunity. Precisely what forms Islam's response to these challenges will take is anyone's guess. Many clear-thinking Moslems recognize that peevish political action against the West is irrelevant. The overwhelming majority, especially after a generation's observation of Turkey, do not consider secularism to constitute an answer. But there is still shockingly little clarification of issues and ideas among modern Moslems.

These problems are, of course, the Moslems' own. There is next to nothing that the non-Moslem could do to help, and even that next to nothing should not be done, in my opinion, unless it is asked for, and then only in the way it is asked for. But the Christian world in particular, by reason of its own most central imperative, would do well to stand by awake, and with its lamps trimmed.

ON TURNING THE PAGE OF A JEWELLED BOOK

(for Dorothy Ham Corbin)

I turned the pages of a jeweled book
and read the singing of a word
held in notes black as spinisters' jade.
On a plain of gold, raised up with bars
of stem, a silver vine spelled "A"
and ran therefrom a runway pressed with
pearl where double "L" speared with
rubies and delphic leaf grew in a maze
of swan. "E" guyed to a griffin
with ropes of ash flared to an almond
tree where angels' bodies filled the page
down to Amen and harassed "L" amid
their wings. "U" was white on white
(like Mondrian but whiter)
and from the lift of the swerves'
crest two fleurs-de-lys sprang up
erect as clarinets. In a thicket
three hounds barked a ferret from
his den where "I" complained like a sybil
from the depth. In a rain of runic heads
the final "A" lay cased about with wind.
And when I let the page fall back
(for I went on to search beginnings out)
I heard a sound of horns as when a
quarry tracked to death is stranded in an oak.

NED O'GORMAN.

Retreat from the Welfare State

J. L. BENVENISTI

BRITISH DOCTORS have recently threatened—and are at this writing still threatening—to withdraw from the National Health Service unless their rate of pay is adjusted to the changed value of money. There never was much likelihood of their carrying out this threat. There is equally little likelihood of their getting the whole of the increase they are asking for, though by normal professional standards their claim seems reasonable enough.

After payment of professional expenses, the average general practitioner in England earns roughly \$6000, which is in the neighborhood of \$4600 after tax. He is now asking for an increase which will bring his average earnings up to something like \$7500; this really means \$5400, or thereabouts according to circumstances. This would be a net increase of about \$800 against a rise in prices (since the last adjustment) of twenty-four per cent.

It is obviously a matter of the most ordinary common sense that the man who has the health of ourselves and our families—and often our lives—in his hands, should be rewarded as handsomely as possible. Yet the government has met the doctors' claim with a delaying tactic that has goaded them into an almost unprofessionally articulate exasperation. This particular quarrel, however, is merely the explosive climax of a process that has been going on for a considerable time; it is merely the culminating point in a slow retreat from our original conception of the Welfare State.

The fact is that the Welfare State was conceived in a period of curiously mingled peril and exaltation—in the period immediately following the Battle of Britain—and it strongly bears the impress of that time. Its purpose was not to raise the standard of living, or to make things easy for everybody. Its purpose was to abolish poverty, to make it impossible for anybody to sink to a level of indigence incompatible with the dignity of a human being.

The essential element in the means by which this purpose was to be achieved was a system of nationwide compulsory insurance. This was to cover all normal risks of loss of income (unemployment, sickness, old age, etc.) by a weekly flat rate payment which varied slightly between different groups—men, for instance,

were to pay more than women—but was unrelated to the contributor's income as such.

These payments, which were to be compulsory for all income recipients except children, married women and those actually in receipt of benefit, were to be fractionally supplemented out of taxes, and were then to be paid into a roughly self-balancing Insurance Fund. Out of this fund all so-called "benefit payments" were to be provided. In a word, you paid, as far as possible, for what you were liable to receive. That was the way the planners thought the people wanted it, and that was probably the way they did want it.

There remained, however, certain contingencies which either from their very nature were incapable of being insured against, like the economic burden of a large family, or, like adequate medical attention, were liable to be so costly that to insure against them was thought to be beyond the means of the ordinary man. To meet this need three further institutions were created: family allowances, a National Health Service (which was to provide every person without further charge with all the medical attention that might be required) and the National Assistance Board, an agency for the assistance of anyone whose needs were through some special circumstance inadequately covered by benefit. These three institutions, which together with the Insurance Fund make up the Welfare State, were to be supported entirely out of taxes, save for a very small payment by the Insurance Fund towards the National Health Service.

NOW SOMETHING has happened that has completely upset these carefully balanced arrangements, and the snag we have struck is simply this: events have utterly falsified certain assumptions on which Lord Beveridge and his colleagues, the original architects of the plan, depended. Oddly enough, these pessimistic assumptions have done quite as much harm as the one which erred in the opposite direction.

It was natural enough that the original planners should have assumed that the general picture of the post-war era would be only slightly more favorable than that presented by the country before the war broke out. They did, it is true, stipulate that there should be a properly thought out employment policy.

Mr. Benvenisti is a British writer and economist who contributes regularly to *The Commonwealth*.

As against this, however, they assumed an unemployment volume of eight and one-half per cent. This last was, of course, a deliberate overestimate, made for the sake of caution, but even caution could hardly have dictated such a percentage had it been possible to foresee the figure that was to be maintained in the years that lay ahead. Since the war this figure has actually been in the neighborhood of one per cent.

Even more important was Lord Beveridge's inevitable inability to foresee the rate at which national income, and wages along with it, would rise in real terms after the war; but the fact is—the figures are in the *Economist*—that since 1938 workers' weekly money earnings have risen by 277 per cent while prices have risen only by 170 per cent.

Thus, since the figure of the flat rate contribution depended on what it was then thought the ordinary man could pay, that figure was fixed needlessly low. Even more important, however, was the effect of these miscalculations on the rates of benefit and in particular on the provision for old age. The principle laid down in the Beveridge Report was that these last should be fixed at bare subsistence and no more. Many workers even in employment were only fractionally above subsistence before the war, and many were actually below it, so this was not really as monstrous as it sounds. Even so, the government two years after the publication of the Beveridge Report went one better than Lord Beveridge and declared that even bare subsistence for those not working was more than the country could afford. Before approving the plan, the government reduced Lord Beveridge's proposed allowances about twelve per cent. With seeming logic, it also fractionally reduced the flat-rate contribution.

Lord Beveridge's estimate of post-war unemployment has proved quite wildly wrong, and had the contribution been maintained, even at its original low level, in terms of changed money values, the Insurance Fund would have had an enormous windfall which it could surely have passed on to old age pensioners and the like. What actually happened was that this windfall was put straight back into the contributor's pocket, though the changing value of money tended to conceal what was really going on; though increases in the flat rate contribution were made from time to time, it was not generally observed that these increases were proportionately much smaller than the rise in wages or the fall in the purchasing power of the pound, and—here is perhaps the root of the trouble—it was not good politics for either party to shout this fact from the housetops.

The result is that contributions are now not only lower than people can afford, but much lower than anybody ever intended. The male wage-earners, for instance, who constitute the largest single group of contributors, should now be paying approximately \$1.40,

if the original estimates are translated into terms of the 1957 pound; they are actually paying less than a dollar.

UNFORTUNATELY, where the contributor has gained the taxpayer has lost. The one really bad mistake of over-optimism made by the planners was in estimating the cost of the Health Service, which, it will be remembered, was to be financed almost entirely out of taxes. Translated into terms of the 1957 pound, it is running about forty per cent above the first estimate and at a figure that is well over a third of the cost of our entire defense forces. There has thus been an enormous shift of burden from the contributor's onto the taxpayer's shoulders, a shift whose magnitude completely distorts the original conception of the Welfare State, and makes nonsense of its underlying principles.

Even without this unforeseen share in the burden of the Welfare State, the weight of taxes in Britain would be enormous. As things are, it may well be said to be terrifying. It may not be realized in America that even in the comparatively modest income group between \$4000 and \$6000 a year our taxes, income for income, are from eighty per cent to one hundred per cent higher than in the U.S. Take the case of a married man with two young children, who, after adding the \$60 a year family allowance (payable in respect of the second child) receives in all \$4500 a year. Such a man still pays over \$800 in income tax!

Taxation such as this is nothing less than a social disaster. Yet here is the quandary in which any British government—and particularly a Tory government—must find itself. Any relief granted to the taxpayer must make increases in existing imposts on the mass of the people, such as the weekly insurance contribution, more difficult than they would otherwise have been, even when such increased imposts would be little worse than a major nuisance to those concerned. In this circumstance it seems a little unfortunate that the government should now have chosen those with incomes in excess of \$6000 a year for a special slight measure of tax relief. Admittedly, these people were even more murderously taxed than the rest of us; admittedly, also, the sum put back in their pockets is nugatory. But this



step has turned a very difficult operation into something near a political impossibility.

As things are, the best we can hope for is that taxation will be held approximately at its present levels, while the flat-rate contribution is very slowly increased. There will of course be further cuts in defense over the next few years. There will also be a slowly increasing yield from the present levels of taxation (if these are maintained), as the national income rises. Against this, however, we must set the steady growth from year to year in the number of old people.

This means that, even if the never-ending pressure for a really substantial lowering of taxes can continue to be successfully resisted—a very sanguine assumption—we shall for a very long time be unable to do very much better for the aged than we are doing now.

And that is tantamount to saying that the idea of abolishing poverty has really been abandoned.

For, after all, poverty is a relative thing. A modern unemployed American, for instance, may have good grounds for feeling sorry for himself and may not unreasonably be an object of commiseration to his neighbors. To an English laborer, however, in full work in the seventeenth or even the nineteenth century, his condition would appear to be one of fantastic and almost unbelievable affluence. In the same way, before the war a guarantee of subsistence or even near-subsistence to the aged would have seemed a quite revolutionary advance. Today the contrast of their condition with the way in which the rest of the nation is living can only excite pity, horror and disgust.

I HAVE ALREADY quoted certain statistics which indicate the rise there has been in real income. There are others relating to meat consumption, clothing purchases and the like which tell a similar story. But statistics are really unnecessary; though our standards are still well below those of America, one has but to use his eyes to see everywhere the evidence of a quiet, solid and hitherto undreamed of prosperity.

It must in fairness be admitted that though the old age pension is far below subsistence level, it can be augmented to bare subsistence by an application to the National Assistance Board. But though officers of this institution are for the most part paragons of courtesy and discretion, it still has attaching to it some of the stigma of the old Poor Law relief. That is why many old age pensioners are either too proud or too frightened to apply. It may be unreasonable of them to be frightened, but the fact remains that they are, and this circumstance explains some of the hair-raising stories one hears from time to time of old people shivering in unheated rooms in the middle of winter and sitting in the dark because they cannot afford to put on the light.

Yet bare subsistence, even if it is technically attainable, is in England a thoroughly miserable condition. It means that if a married couple contrive to keep within what appears to be the official estimates of their requirements for food, heat, etc.—an almost impossible feat—they will have left approximately ten cents a day between them for such extravagance as the purchase of a postage stamp or a newspaper, for bus rides, tooth-paste, razor blades and a very occasional cigarette over and above the free ration. This last works out at a fraction over three cigarettes a day between the pair. Actually, cigarettes or no cigarettes, most old age pensioners come near to starvation.

The problem of securing for the aged something like a human and acceptable level of existence depends, as has been shown, on our ability to increase the flat-rate contribution by a very considerable amount, or on finding some alternative method of raising the same money from much the same kind of people. Paradoxically enough, the Labor Party, if returned to power, might actually have a better chance than its opponents of thus putting its hand into the wage-earner's pocket and getting away with it. It could at least claim that it had not made the wealthiest section of the community the object of preferential public munificence, and could thus make an appeal for sacrifice to its followers which would now not be accepted if it came from Tory lips.

One possible line of solution which a Labor government might attempt would be a sales tax, which could be suitably dressed up as a "Retirement Tax." In view of the strong feeling which the plight of the old age pensioner is beginning to arouse, such a tax might not be too unpopular.

One thing is certain. Old age pensions will be the key issue at the next election, and this not only because of the strong sentiment that surrounds the subject. There are the actual men and women of pensionable age. Today these already make up over one-sixth of the adult nation—and they all have votes.

Thus the same kinds of democratic stress and pressure which, though hidden on this occasion, have nearly wrecked the Welfare State, may conceivably succeed in saving it. It is to be hoped that they will.

AN APPEAL

The New Hope Home, of Brussels, Belgium, cares for seventy-five aged refugees from DP camps, East and West. It needs four thousand dollars a month the rest of this year until local donations can take over. The Director, Marie Fallon, writes that the only thing "these old people want now is to find in our Home a sort of family life and the possibility of dying there in peace, surrounded by our care and affection." Tax deductible contributions for the Home may be sent to: Catholic Relief Services, 350 Fifth Ave., New York 1, N. Y.

HOW MUCH DISCUSSION, HOW FREE?

EARLIER THIS YEAR Father Thurston Davis, editor of *America*, prepared an address for CBS radio which was considered too controversial for the Church of the Air. Later the talk was published in *America*. The priest's words in type seemed harmless enough, irenic in spirit and moderate in tone. Essentially, he had prepared an appeal for Catholics urging them to make their own beliefs and practices clearer to their non-Catholic neighbors. The Jesuit editor suggested that religious tensions might be greatly relieved if each side would stop now and then and just listen to what the opposition had to say for itself.

But Father Davis' talk moved on the periphery of such *verboden* areas as birth control, the parochial school controversy and censorship. It was not the sort of thing CBS wants for its religious programming. Father Davis was politely told it could not be given.

The broadcasting company, which rode out the ensuing controversy in silence, had a pretty good case for itself. If the Church of the Air is meant to be devotional and inspirational, perhaps the questions which Father Davis brought up do not belong on that particular program. But they are important questions and they do deserve some kind of public airing. CBS, as well as the other networks, would seem to have some special obligation to give them the attention they deserve.

I am afraid the truth is that the networks are anything but eager to get involved in any such discussions. They well know that religious controversies are dynamite. No mass medium is particularly anxious to get involved in them. They are all afraid of what such controversies lead to, and I don't know that I blame them. Look at the fix WGN in Chicago got into over the "Martin Luther" case. The station was caught in the crossfire of a bitter Protestant-Catholic dispute. It came out of the ordeal looking like the plaything of pressure groups and gained no one's respect.

It seems to me that the basic issue in these recurrent questions of censorship is not so much whether the networks, universities and magazines have "guts" enough to ignore pressure and encourage controversy—though that is indeed a key question—but whether Americans really want free discussion, with all that it entails.

The universities, the magazines and networks do not censor because they are out to suppress ideas; they do so because they are afraid of the consequences of free discussion. They are afraid of the fix they will be in if the controversial speech or article (more likely, these days, the writer or speaker) arouses the fury of a large enough and influential enough group. WGN has neither a Catholic nor a Protestant bias; it would

merely like to stay on friendly terms with everybody.

In "Death of a Salesman" Arthur Miller wrote tragically of a man who wanted above all to be "liked—well liked." Willy Loman, poor man, was driven by the modern American passion to be universally popular. Nowhere is that drive more insistent than in the mass media, where even great issues are usually so watered down that there remains only the appearance rather than the substance of that "continuing debate" which was designed to nurture our democracy. Paradoxically enough, as these media have become more massive the limits of discussion have become ever more narrow. Editors, journalists, writers, lecturers and radio-TV commentators are often the very high priests of the deadening Nice Guy cult.

I wonder just how much free discussion we actually want. By "we" I mean the American people as a whole. We say discussion is the lifeblood of our democracy. We say we are not afraid of any idea, true or false, good or bad, as long as the true, the good and the beautiful can get a hearing. In a famous phrase we say "heresy, yes; conspiracy, no." No one ever conspired over a national network or in full view of the press on a speaker's stand.

How much free discussion do we want? Put it another way. Free discussion means hearing the truth all right, but it also means hearing error and nonsense, stupidity and lies. How much error, nonsense and stupidity, how many lies are we willing to bear in the name of free discussion? Every man and every group seem to have their own limit. But where does American society itself draw the line? You may not cry "Fire!" in a crowded theater, and all that. But I am not talking about crying "Fire!" or about crowded theaters; I am talking about the American marketplace of ideas. How restricted is it? How restricted should it be?

Every time one of these cases of suppression comes up, the simple fact is that someone may not speak, something may not be said. The censorious, of course, do not call the suppression suppression or advocate the end of free discussion—no, just the end of this particular discussion. The reasons given are often masterpieces of human ingenuity and the power to rationalize. They usually sound persuasively logical. But add up all the suppressions, justify them and others to come, and what has happened to the idea, if not the ideal, of free discussion?

Father Davis learned where CBS draws the line. The owners of "Martin Luther" learned where WGN-TV does. But where does American society as a whole want the line drawn? Where do I? Where do you?

JOHN COGLEY.

THE SCREEN

THE GREEKS HAD A WORD FOR IT

THIS WEEK'S new films concentrate pretty heavily on women who know where they're going. Even the Greeks, producers of few movies, have come up with an item about a very determined young woman who wants things her way or not at all. She's interested in love and shows her interest with gay abandon; but she's dead set against marriage which, she insists, would limit her freedom and spoil love. She meets her come-uppance, before the finale, at the hands of a rugged football player whom she agreed to marry and then jilted at the altar.

Although its plot, reminiscent at times of "Carmen" and "A Streetcar Named Desire," obviously limits its appeal, "Stella" has many absorbing qualities as a movie. Michael Cacoyannis wrote the lively script from a play by J. Cambanelis and directed the cast with an eye to realism. Photographed in black and white, "Stella" has striking shots of Athens street scenes and has caught well the earthy atmosphere of the open-air bistro where working men gather and where Stella sings. A strange metallic music made by the bouzoukia orchestra pervades the film; and the frequent shots of men lined up in a row and looking like a modern Greek frieze as they gracefully dance to this music add to the total effect of a silent Greek chorus commenting on Stella's actions.

Much of the success of the movie rests on the fine performance given by Melina Mercouri in the title role. Combining some of the flare and beauty of Garbo and Dietrich, this famous Greek actress has a down-to-earth quality all her own and she plays the passionate Stella with a vitality that makes understandable why men can't resist her. The film does not defend her career as a *femme fatale* but does reveal her honesty in making clear to her suitors her argument against marriage and her inability to remain faithful to one man. Outstanding among Stella's victims are Aleko Alexandrakis, as a handsome but weak man of good family who has a nervous breakdown when Stella throws him over, and Georges Foundas as the football hero who is a match for Stella until the day of their wedding. The movie is too long and at times gets more explicit than artistically necessary, but it is still a film of unique power and distinction.

LAUREN BACALL plays the title role in "Designing Woman" with a great deal of dash; and she is helped considerably by designer Helen Rose. Miss Rose not only thought up the original idea for the picture but also created the stunning clothes worn by

Miss Bacall, Dolores Gray and others. George Wells shaped Miss Rose's idea about a marriage between a fashion designer and a sports writer into a witty script, Vincente Minnelli directed his cast with the enthusiasm and speed appropriate to such a zany comedy, and Dore Schary wrapped his whole production up in CinemaScope and MetroColor. And then of course there are plenty of men in a cast which is led by Gregory Peck as the sports columnist who's not exactly at home in his wife's chi-chi apartment or with her even chi-chier friends, Sam Levene as his editor, Tom Helmore as a theatrical producer determined to have Miss Bacall design his next show, and several other men from the opposing sports and theatrical groups, plus a couple of gangster types to round out the absurd plot. The good cast handle the bright dialogue well. Although the picture strains at times to be risqué and its jokes about a punch-drunk ex-pug (effectively played by Mickey Shaughnessy) make one slightly uncomfortable, "Designing Woman" is, on the whole, an amusing comedy.

PERHAPS the most unlikely comedy of the year is "The Little Hut"—unlikely that this tasteless stage play, which failed on Broadway, should have been made into a movie at all, and, even more unlikely, that Ava Gardner should be cast as an elegant English lady. In writing the script, F. Hugh Herbert (who also served as co-producer with director Mark Robson) found himself swamped with problems: Nancy Mitford's English adaptation of Andre Roussin's play was about three men who shared a woman on a deserted island. This is not exactly movie material. So in the movie, which finally gets to the deserted island, the wife (Ava Gardner), trying to make her husband (Stewart Granger) jealous, tells him that the other man (David Niven) has been her lover. She tries to make them both jealous when the ship's cook (Walter Chiari) turns up disguised as a savage. This is scarcely movie material and what with plenty of leering and overacting, the whole thing is handled ineptly—some-what like an embarrassed adolescent attempting to tell an off-color joke.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

COMMUNICATIONS

"THE SHORTAGE OF TEACHERS"

Philadelphia, Pa.

TO the Editors: I would like to offer these comments on the scarcity-of-teachers problem:

Science teachers, actual and potential, are hired away by industry. Solution? Pay more. Non-science

teachers, actual and potential, probably are not hired away by industry quite so consistently, but there is also a shortage of good ones here. Solution? Not quite so simple as paying **more**.

Sometimes a teacher stands in front of his class of massively bored students and is all but swallowed up by their yawns; they are simply not interested in his social problems, or his survey of American culture; they are there to get their union card (i.e., degree) in order to get a good job with G.E. or A.T.&T. They want to get on with their accounting and business law and quantitative analysis, and they are almost totally resistant to this compulsory "culture." They are not interested in *education*, and are impatient with it; they

want no jam on their bread. They want to get through and get their job and get down to the real business of life: participating in the "American way of life" they've been catechized to believe in by *Time* and *Life* and their favorite TV channel. And besides, they've been conditioned to resist being educated by twelve years of compulsory education.

The question is constantly in my mind: should anyone beyond the age of, say, twelve, or fourteen, be *compelled* or *coerced* to sit for one hour in a classroom to be *educated*? I realize there is a strong American tradition for solving most problems: hold out a bigger and more golden carrot. But I submit that this will not do for *education*; for vocational training perhaps—but not for education. It's against the nature of it; it's too mixed up with loving. You'll not achieve your objective. And you cannot expect a teacher to *give* himself under these circumstances. (It is, of course, a privilege to teach). It's against his nature.

If the nation decides it needs more H-bomb engineers, let the army train them, and pay them well; or if it needs automation wallahs, let G.E. do it; after all, they have the know-how. But let's not get this stuff mixed up with education.

JOHN STANLEY.

"RELIGION ON THE CAMPUS"

Lake Forest, Ill.

TO the Editors: Why is it that Father Maguire in "Religion on the Campus" [Apr. 5] talks of theology and not of religion? The answer is clearly stated by him when he says: "The blind spot is not for religion but for theology as such." To which he sagaciously adds: "One finds it even among devout Catholics." This seems to be true not only of the devout Catholics in secular institutions of higher learning, but even of those in Catholic colleges and universities. Is it any wonder that the theologian is not given an admission ticket to the academic fraternity when he teaches not theology, but religious catechism? Father Maguire will have done us all a great service, if his remarks are applied not only to secular schools but to our own Catholic schools. For it seems to me that there is grave doubt as to whether or not Catholic higher education is possible unless "theology" and not "catechism" is taught.

The whole problem is of course to advance and elevate those very elements which render our curricula in Catholic colleges "Catholic." When this is done, not only will our religious teaching be appropriate to higher education, but the theologian will assume the position which is his *de facto* and *de jure*. I mean not only a position in the academic life, but the highest such position.

RICHARD J. WESTLEY.

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Man and Mass Culture

THOMAS F. CURLEY

ANY DISCUSSION of mass culture should attend to the following fact, stressed by Werner Sombart and Ortega y Gasset: from the sixth century A. D. until 1800, Europe did not exceed a total population of 180 millions; from 1810 to 1914, the population of Europe increased from 180 million to 460 million. Technology created the masses and keeps them in being. The masses man the machines and consume their products. The marriage is indissoluble.

Explicit awareness of the masses did not lag far behind their emergence. The writings of Marx and Nietzsche, the novels of Dickens, Balzac and Dostoevsky and the more recent schools of sociology all advert to the masses. This present volume* is a formidable attempt to help create an "interdisciplinary focus on problems common to everyone who takes a serious interest in what is happening to this aspect of modern civilization." The sub-title is more precise than the title in that two significant parts of mass culture receive little or no notice. These are education and religion in a mass society. The first is ignored and the second is referred to only by the way in Frederick Elkins, "God, Radio and the Movies."

In the light of the book's true purpose, the absence is of minor importance. The editors have gathered between two covers a number of excellent essays, many of which appear here for the first time. Of the eight sections, five deal specifically with the various popular arts and two, "Perspectives of Mass Culture" and "The Overview," offer a more general treatment. The first section consists of introductory essays by the editors who were in such radical disagreement about their subject that they could not collaborate on an introduction. In a joint preface, however, they remark that this "area of study cuts across the artificial academic boundaries that so often serve as a barrier keeping scholars of like interests from speaking to each other." I'm not so sure of that. After reading the book I'm inclined to think the scholars would not be talking to each other at all without the boundaries. Good fences make for politeness. This is not an entirely frivolous

*MASS CULTURE, THE POPULAR ARTS IN AMERICA. Edited by Bernard Rosenberg and David Manning White. The Free Press. \$6.50.

Mr. Curley is a novelist and critic who lives in New York.

remark. A close study of the two general sections and a comparison of these to the rest reveal the chief, and unavoidable failure of this collection. In this regard, a sentence of Ortega's ought to be kept in mind: "The social situation of the intellectual is an extrinsic and a surface problem in comparison with the intellectual situation of the intellect itself."

For example: if there is one proposition that is agreed upon by the contributors, or at least left largely undisputed, it is that modern technology, in Bernard Rosenberg's words "is the necessary and sufficient cause of mass culture." And mass culture (Gilbert Seldes disagrees) is very probably an adequate explanation of the social situation of the intellectual. It is, however, of very limited use in an understanding of the intellectual situation of the intellect. Yet this is just the understanding we need if we are to explain the philosophic incoherence of social science and of this volume.

In "Historical Perspectives of Popular Culture," here reprinted, Leo Lowenthal writes: "The instruments of [social] research have been brought to a high degree of refinement. But is this enough? Empirical social science has become a kind of applied asceticism. It stands clear of any entanglements with foreign powers and thrives in an atmosphere of rigidly enforced neutrality. *It refuses to enter the sphere of meaning.*" (My italics.) Mr. Lowenthal goes on to say that the only social research laboratories that are properly admissible are historical situations and he reveals the roots of his own thought in the concept of understanding (*verstehen*) as it was established historically and philosophically by Dilthey and sociologically by Simmel.

ONE DOES not miss such a framework in articles on particular subjects; those of Orwell and Edmund Wilson stand on their own, but the essays by Dwight Macdonald, Clement Greenberg, Ernest van den Haag, Melvin Tumin and Leslie Fiedler, to name only a few, would benefit by a statement similar to Lowenthal's.

A passage from Macdonald's essay is a good example. Having stated that mass culture is not and can never be any good, he explains: "I take it as axiomatic that culture can only be produced by and for human beings. But in so far as people are organized (more

strictly, disorganized) as masses, they lose their human identity and quality. For the masses are in historical time what a crowd is in space: a large quantity of people unable to express themselves as human beings because they are related to one another neither as individuals nor as members of communities—indeed, they are not related to *each other* at all, but only to something distant, abstract, non-human: a football game or bargain sale in the case of a crowd, a system of industrial production, a party or a State in the case of the masses.”

One's first impulse is to agree, but to agree for the wrong reasons is to misunderstand. If human nature is dependent, for its very existence, upon a society of a certain kind, then that nature is caused by society. In this view, particular forms of society bestow humanity; another, mass society, destroys it. But Macdonald says that in a genuine community it makes a difference what an individual does. He is important. Now if this importance is genuine and not merely the result of the form of the society, then society is not a sufficient reason for the existence of human nature. And if society is not, neither is history. From this point of view, society may be an indispensable condition of human existence but it cannot be its cause. Similar criticisms could be made of many of the other essays. There is brilliance and profundity in abundance; what is lacking is thoroughness.

Lowenthal is not the only scholar who has recognized the need for theory. In their *Character and Social Structure*, Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills write: “If ever there was a field needing above all else imaginative theory, that field is American social psychology today. Only by such work, rather than by delving into unrelated specialities, can we at once avail ourselves of our intellectual opportunities and avoid slivering our image of man.” Mills and Gerth went about to construct a model by fusing two major streams of thought: Freud for character, and Marx for social structure.

What is significant about these sources of Lowenthal's and of Mills' and Gerth's, is that they wrote during and after the breakdown of Hegelianism, the last full-fledged metaphysics in the Western world. The attempt to understand man or society as a whole was not abandoned, but that attempt was now made with the conviction that metaphysics was unnecessary to such an understanding and impossible in itself. The ancient notion of truth, the conformity of the intellect to being, was seen to be unattainable once the matter of sensation was cut off from an intelligible foundation. And when this concept of truth is lost, being gives way to becoming, nature to history.

WHAT exasperated Nietzsche in his contemporaries was their thoughtless attempt to wed Christian ethics to scientific evolutionism. The death of God that

Nietzsche announced had nothing to do with the true existence of God; it referred to the idea of God. And Ortega, in his essay on Dilthey—Ortega explains that in order to expound Dilthey it is necessary to complete him—states that man's consciousness forms a closed cyclical system, all parts of which find their explanation and reason within the system itself. Thus, deprived of intuition, the intellect and all its works are psychologized. There is cogency in the refusal of Dostoevsky's underground man to admit that two plus two equals four. He doesn't want it to and, since truth is relative, his will is the norm.

Only recently a man of radically different temperament, David Riesman, argued that among the ethical convictions needed today is a belief in one's own values and the belief that only in our differences from others will we find our identity with them. Every individual is a sovereign state and if he possesses the “nerve of failure,” he may cultivate his sovereign freedom and become autonomous. What I am describing is a radical solipsism and, if the description is at all correct, one might well ask how the social sciences could have flourished in such a climate. Largely, I think, by a progressive limitation of concern, by constructing laboratories and by the erection of those artificial boundaries which both of the editors lament in their preface.

Within these boundaries the scholar is free to invent a language appropriate to the conditions of his experiment. For in the languages common to us all there is imbedded a philosophy radically at variance with the jargon of the scientists. Good and evil, truth and falsity, justice and injustice connote more than an individual's or a society's preferences; they imply that the world, the noumena, is somehow or other knowable and known and that, ultimately, the norms of conduct and thought exist independently of man. They imply, further, a philosophy of being which cannot be purely immanent. In this contradiction we have a clue to one of the causes of the hollowing out of language studied by the Austrian critic, Karl Kraus. He argues that in this hollowing out of language we can see the disintegration and even disappearance of the concept and existence of the autonomous individual. And yet autonomy is high on the scale of value of nineteenth and twentieth century humanism. It is in the tension between these concepts and values that the present mass culture exists and is evaluated. The possibilities of a truly autonomous individual in a mass culture is still a question.

I think it imprecise to say that social scientists refuse to enter the sphere of meaning. They are unable to enter. They must either construct a positivist notion of being or, like the late Morris Cohen, confess themselves to be “mystics” in believing “that all words point to a realm of being deeper and wider than the words themselves.”

Out of an Abundant Love of Created Things

THE WAPSHOT CHRONICLE. By John Cheever. Harper. \$3.50.

By WILLIAM ESTY

THE WAPSHOT CHRONICLE must have been fun to write; it is wonderful fun to read. The reviewers on the whole have not been kind to it, pointing out that the book is not "really" a novel. No more is *The Fall* really a novel, but who has snubbed Camus for that? As a matter of fact, *The Wapshot Chronicle* is the perfect book to read right after one has done one's duty and finished the Frenchman's brilliant, depressingly masochistic monologue. Irving Howe, in an excellent *New Republic* review, noted that "Camus seems to have lost the affection for created things that the novelist must have if he is to be a novelist and men must have if they are not simply to expire from boredom."

Well, John Cheever possesses the love of created things in abundance, and in his pages you will discover what things a New England evening wind smells of, which ingredients to add to carp before boiling, how it feels to traverse, naked and at night, the multiple roofs of a millionaire's castle in search of your lover's terrace, or to swim, again naked, through the vivifying waves off a Northern beach to the rock where your bride sits combing her hair like a siren. *The Wapshot Chronicle* abounds in lights and colors and smells, but especially in the lights, colors and smells of water—a bay, a trout lake—for "all things of the sea belong to Venus," and Venus with her son Eros are the true heroine and hero of Mr. Cheever's novel.

The Wapshots have always lived in St. Botolphs, a decaying New England port town. As St. Botolphs has declined the Wapshot men have lost their ability to cope with the world, and old Leander Wapshot, whose ancestors sailed their ships to Java and lechered in Samoa on the home voyage, is reduced to plying a bay in a decrepit launch,

carrying tourists to an amusement park. He lives on the bounty of his eccentric Cousin Honora, the last Wapshot with "the wherewithal," and when his launch founders in a storm his wife Sarah inflicts the final indignity by converting the raised hulk into New England's Only Floating Gift Shoppe. Leander, like many a Yankee captain before him, dies at sea—as the result of swimming too far from the beach one morning.

But if Leander Wapshot is an absurd old man, his philosophy, his joy in created things, is the book's message. "He would like them (his sons Moses and Coverly) to grasp that the unobserved ceremoniousness of his life was a gesture or a sacrament toward the excellence and the continuousness of things." And if Leander's ceremoniousness includes the avoidance of sleeping in moonlight, his last message to his sons ends with the injunction "Fear tastes like a rusty knife and do not let her into your house. Courage tastes of blood. Stand up straight. Admire the world. Relish the love of a gentle woman. Trust in the Lord."

The quaintness of Leander's prose style is part of "the rich dark varnish of decorum and quaintness" that overlays St. Botolphs. The first part of *The Wapshot Chronicle* is a wonderfully funny exploration of St. Botolphs and its "characters": Theophilus Gates who put a For Sale sign on his lawn to convince the town he was losing money; the undertaker who "like any good Yankee . . . had never trimmed the bereaved without remarking on The Uncertainty of All Earthly Things"; Uncle Peepee Marshmallow; but above all the Wapshots, Leander and his Cousin Honora and Aunt Adelaide.

We see Leander, who hates "foreigners," trying to raise money by offering his pure-Yankee-stock body to the local doctor for "an experiment." We watch Cousin Honora systematically avoiding signing the form signifying approval of the bank's management of her

trust, and sending the bus company a Christmas check in lieu of depositing her fares. All this is a feast for the reader, but Mr. Cheever also knows that "if we accept the quaintness of St. Botolphs we must also accept the fact that it was the country of spite fences and inter-necine quarrels" and respect for craft and dishonesty. And he knows that Moses and Coverly Wapshot must seek their fortune and their manhood away from this woman-dominated town, much as they and Mr. Cheever love it. In any case, Cousin Honora has decided they "might go to someplace like New York or Washington, someplace strange and distant," in the tradition of the Wapshot men.

The rest of the novel is concerned with the brothers' adventures and misadventures in those exotic cities. The eccentricities of the New England port town yield to the vagaries of the Great World, the world of psychological tests for jobs and security firings and womanless islands in the Pacific where rockets are launched. The craziness of St. Botolphs is found to be preferable to that of the world, for the former is simple and traditional like the town's whole way of life, while the latter is more damaging, more impersonal, and is not even recognized as madness.

Fans of Mr. Cheever's short stories laid in Manhattan know how this bottomlessly sophisticated writer can use the device of an innocent eye to reveal the grotesqueries inherent in what we all see and live every day. That grotesquerie is present in *The Wapshot Chronicle*, and also Cheever's awareness of the loneliness and sense of defeat that visit most of us; but all is overlaid with the gently reassuring atmosphere of a fairy tale for grownups. Mr. Cheever permits himself eighteenth-century asides—"it is not my fault that New England is full of eccentric old women," "we cannot endow him with wisdom and powers of invention that he does not have"—that a carping critic

would call coyly self-indulgent, but which are justified by the enchantment of the tale. We know that Moses and Coverly will remain faithful through all their trials to their father's credo and to lovely Venus, Mr. Cheever's good fairy; and that she will guide the brothers safely at last to fortune, love and happiness.

Savage Humor

MURPHY. By Samuel Beckett. Grove Press. \$3.50.

PROUST. By Samuel Beckett. Grove Press. \$2.50.

EVERGREEN REVIEW. Vol. 1, No. 1. Grove Press. \$1.00.

By VIVIAN MERCIER

SINCE *Proust* was first published in 1931 and *Murphy* in 1938, their American debut presages an outbreak of the critical disease popularly known as hindsight. Reviewers will be looking for the seeds of *Godot*, *Molloy*, and *Malone Dies*. In the process, both books will be seriously misjudged. Now that we know what Beckett has become, nobody will believe that *Proust* can be that badly written; on the other hand, *Murphy* viewed through the spectacles of *Godot* will seem far less brilliantly original than it appeared to those of us who first read it almost twenty years ago. (I don't claim any credit for being onto Beckett so early; he was the first *avant-garde* writer my prep school had produced since Oscar Wilde, so I couldn't help hearing of him.)

Certainly there are passages in *Proust* which remind us of the later works, like the reference to "the perilous zones in the life of the individual . . . when for a moment the boredom of living is replaced by the suffering of being." But such passages usually occur when Beckett is paraphrasing Proust most faithfully, so faithfully that his essay has been used for review purposes by French majors. It is the manner—jargon-ridden, allusive, spawning mixed metaphors—rather than the matter which infuriates. Take the opening sentences: "The Proustian

equation is never simple. The unknown, choosing its weapons from a hoard of values is also the unknowable. And the quality of its action falls under two signatures." The jumbled metaphors of "equation," "weapons," "values," "signatures" find their counterpart in the welter of abstract nouns.

Murphy proves that Beckett learned quickly, for some of the most ridiculous snatches of dialogue in that ruthlessly funny novel sound like quotations from *Proust* or some similarly pretentious monograph. This is a philosophic rather than a satiric novel about the human condition, but it parodies human motivations in exactly the spirit of Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Not once can we convict *Murphy* of stooping to realism, yet we recognize a number of authentic human predicaments reflected in its distorting mirror.

Everyone in the book needs Murphy, "a seedy solipsist," whereas he strives to need only himself. Intermittently he needs Celia, who tries to make a bourgeois of him, not realizing that she will thus abolish the *Murphy* she fell in love with. When not obsessed by Celia or studying astrology, *Murphy* likes to induce trance by rocking himself in a rocking chair; his body having thus been set at rest, he can "come alive in his mind." Celia finally pushes him into a job, at a private mental home, where he soon realizes that the schizophrenics have achieved permanently that which he can enjoy only intermittently—complete indifference to the external world.

His efforts to attain schizophrenia fail, but he burns to death while tied to his rocker in one of his trances. Celia and the others must rearrange their lives without him. The novel ends in a scene symbolic of all frustration: Celia, who is back at her old trade of prostitution, takes her grandfather kite flying in Kensington Gardens; when his kite breaks away and flies out of sight, he leaps from his wheelchair and staggers after it. Beckett refrains from telling us that *Murphy* is to Celia as the kite is to her grandfather, but his pitiless words some-

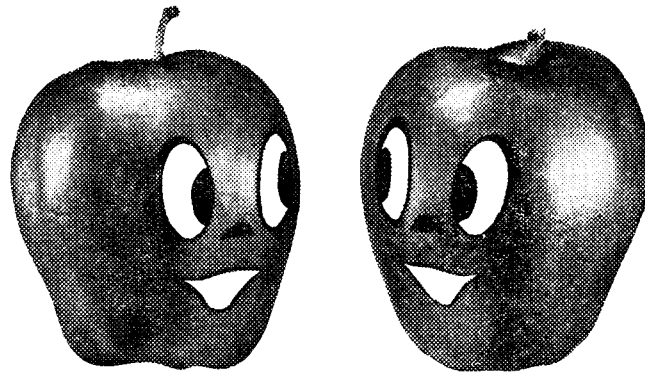
how evoke the same pathos as broods over all his post-war French works—even *L'Innommable*, not yet translated, which takes place entirely within the sealed mind of a schizophrenic (I think!).

Aside from this chapter, *Murphy* radiates throughout that all-embracing, subversive irreverence which characterizes so much Anglo-Irish writing—and a great deal of Gaelic literature as well. Here, for instance, is the scattering of *Murphy's* ashes: "Some hours later Cooper took the packet of ash from his pocket, where earlier in the evening he had put it for greater security, and threw it angrily at a man who had given him great offence. It bounced, burst, off the wall on to the floor, where at once it became the object of much dribbling, passing, trapping, shooting, punching, heading and even some recognition from the gentleman's code [Rugby Union football]. By closing time the body, mind and soul of *Murphy* were freely distributed over the floor of the saloon; and before another dayspring greyed the earth had been swept away with the sand, the beer, the butts, the glass, the matches, the spits, the vomit." The savage humor of this or any other scene never interrupts the measured cadences of the prose.

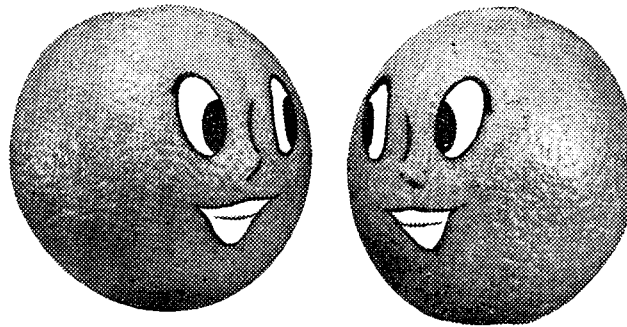
Three basic differences separate *Murphy* from the French trilogy of novels and from *Godot*: first, its style is mannered and polysyllabic, in contrast to the Céline-like colloquialism of Beckett's French; second, it lacks compassion; third, unlike the French novels, it is written in the third person, not the first, and avoids interior monologue. I myself am now falling into the sin of hindsight; let me say only that this was a remarkable novel in the year of Munich and that it's still a remarkable novel in the year after Budapest.

By coincidence, Jean-Paul Sartre's interview with *L'Express*, "After Budapest," appears next to "Dante and the Lobster," by Beckett, in the first issue of *Evergreen Review*, a new quarterly. This tale with a moral was to my mind the best story in Beckett's first collection, *More Pricks Than Kicks* (1934), now even scarcer than the first edi-

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tion of *Murphy*. *Evergreen Review* also reprints most of the poems in *Echo's Bones* (1935). Beckett's free verse strikes me as fashionable (in a fashion already outmoded by 1935) but bad. The best poem, "Enueg I," is autobiographical and touching in a surprisingly naive way. (*Enueg*,

in case you've forgotten, is Provençal for *ennui*.) All the same, one might be slightly better occupied reading Baby Dodds' reminiscences of the riverboats or Henri Michaux's report on taking mescaline, both of which also appear in this issue of *Evergreen*.

The Public Man in War and Peace

DE VALERA AND THE MARCH OF A
NATION. By Mary C. Bromage.
Noonday Press. \$4.95.

By DAVID H. GREENE

EVENTS in the Middle East make us realize that a big puddle in which only big frogs have the say can still have its surface ruffled by the unruliness of infinitely smaller frogs. Mary C. Bromage's *De Valera and the March of a Nation* reminds us that Ireland too had her moment, when her neutrality during World War II must have tempted Winston Churchill to describe the Irish in words much like those the king of the Brobdingnags used to characterize the English, who were smaller than he. The man who could play such a ticklish game as adjourning the Dail when President Roosevelt died and then offering condolences to the German ambassador when the death of Hitler was reported, or who could hesitate before sending units of the Dublin fire department to a Belfast in flames from German raiders, for fear of violating his neutrality, was no novice at playing a lone and dangerous game. Although he has always maintained of course that in this he had the support of the Irish people, the fact is that he never put it to them. Certainly the Irish men and women, estimated at 200,000, who worked in English warplants or served in His Majesty's forces during the war would hardly have seconded his expression of sympathy for the German people over the loss of their leader.

If there is one conclusion which the reader of Mrs. Bromage's excellent narrative is compelled to draw, it is that De Valera could call

himself a people's leader when he had the people behind him and continue to call himself the same thing when he quite clearly did not. For six glorious years he led his country out of bondage with the gun and the American dollar, and when in the summer of 1921 he sat down with Lloyd George to discuss the truce which ended the period of assassination, reprisal and ambush known as the Anglo-Irish War, he had reason to feel that he had brought his country closer to the realization of its dream of freedom than any of the great Irish leaders of the past had ever hoped to do. But six months later, as president of the Dail, he refused to accept the terms of the treaty signed by representatives of the Irish Republic—whom he had selected himself—and His Majesty's government. This treaty set up the Irish Free State and gave Ulster the right to decide its own course of action. A bitter debate ensued which split Ireland into two unequal camps and led to Civil War and the blackest episode in all Irish history. It was also the blackest episode in De Valera's career, for as events were to prove, he did not have the people behind him and yet he persisted in throwing a country already exhausted by conflict into more bloodshed, this time all of it Irish blood.

Michael Collins was killed in an ambush in Cork. Arthur Griffith, the third member of the triumvirate who became president of the new state at De Valera's defection, died of cerebral hemorrhage and of Republican harassment, if one takes the word of his physician Oliver St. John Gogarty. Erskine Childers, who stood with De Valera on the other side, was shot for carrying

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firearms. These men were merely the best among the many who might have helped build the new state if they could have survived the bloodshed in which it was baptized. And the tragic consequences of the Civil War have not yet run their course, for the organization known as the IRA which claims direct descent from the original army of the Irish Republic and continues to wage war against England with surreptitious bombs and raids on Northern police barracks is part of that heritage. Today nobody believes that there is any future in that kind of nonsense.

Appraisals have been made of De Valera's strange personality—or the lack of it—by many of his countrymen. One wit divided Irish history into three periods: the pagan era, the Christian era and De Valera. St. John Ervine called him a Pinchbeck Parnell and Yeats said he was "a living argument rather than a living man. All propaganda, no human life, but not bitter or hysterical or unjust." More recently Sean O'Casey wrote that he was outside everything except himself. "There seemed to be no sound of Irish wind, water, folkchant, or birdsong in the dry dull voice." Mrs. Bromage, who is an American student of Irish history, does not add a portrait to the collection because her subject is not the private but the public man. With her vast knowledge of modern Irish history (I met her in Dublin in 1939 when she and her husband sat in on every session of the Dail) and her ability to keep from either praise or castigation without falling into the trap of writing with the kind of lifelessness that is frequently the price of impartiality, she has written a capital book about De Valera and about Ireland itself.

REVIEWERS

William Esty is a young American critic. This is his first appearance in **The Commonweal**.

Vivian Mercier, a frequent contributor, is on the faculty of the City College of New York.

David H. Greene is a member of the English department of New York University.

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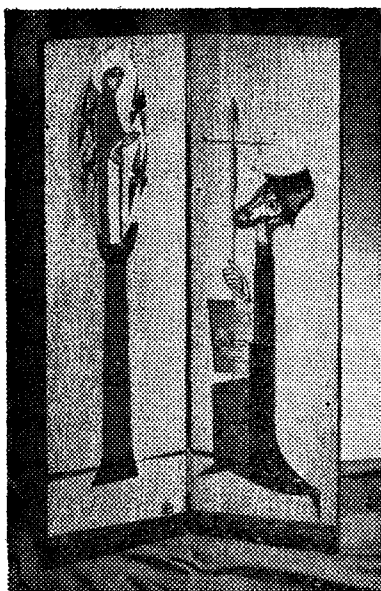
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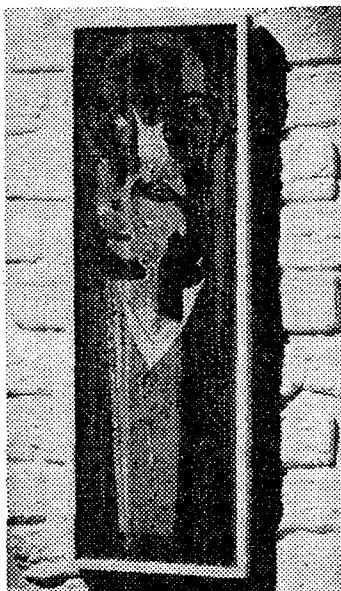
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